



Sinkhole Incident at Faithway Drive

AFTER ACTION REPORT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the most recognized phenomenon associated with Florida's geography are sinkholes. Inasmuch, sinkholes can, and do, emerge in areas where there is no threat to life or property. Conversely, they can also cause significant destruction and the loss of life. The latter was the unfortunate circumstance which occurred on the 28th of February, 2013 at 240 Faithway Drive in the Seffner area of Hillsborough County. At 11:02 pm, Hillsborough County Fire Rescue, Emergency Dispatch Communications (HCFR-EDC) received a 911 call for a structural collapse at 240 Faithway Drive. Upon their arrival at 11:11 p.m., units discovered that a sinkhole had developed under the foundation of a home, which in turn resulted in one resident of the home being enveloped in the ensuing collapse.

Unfortunately, due to the nature of the topography and unstable grounds surrounding the sinkhole, rescue efforts were severely hampered. After further examination of the incident scene, and recognition of the potential life safety threat to rescue personnel, it was determined that immediate search and rescue activities were not a viable option. Subsequently, the focus of the efforts shifted from a search and rescue operation to a recovery function.

As the incident progressed, the ground immediately adjacent to both sides of the primary sinkhole was tested and also determined to be unstable. This development further hampered the use of the resources on the scene to conduct any type recovery activity. While multiple agencies, organizations, and private partners all worked together diligently, recovery options were exhausted without success. On March 3rd, the demolition of the home located at 240 Faithway Drive was initiated.

While the outcome of the incident was tragically unfortunate, it should be noted that no additional injuries were incurred by the residents of the home, residents of the structures immediately adjacent to the primary dwelling, or any personnel involved in the response to this incident.

As with any incident, there are strengths and weaknesses that are identified as part of a self-examination and evaluation process. The purpose of this report is to identify strengths to be maintained and built upon, identify potential areas for further improvement, and support development of corrective actions.

Major Strengths

The major strengths identified during this real world event are as follows:

- County agencies, contractors and community agencies worked together to accomplish tasks, complete them on-time and at a moment's notice.
- All necessary agencies were identified and reported to the incident early in the event as part of the response.
- Briefings held throughout the incident provided good situational awareness and helped to ensure that resource needs were met.
- Support staff provided for the Mobile Command Vehicle (MCV) was effective in ensuring that the unit ran effectively throughout the entire event.
- Early activation of Fire Department public relations officers (PRO) allowed a smooth transition to a county wide public information operation (ESF 14) as the incident progressed. This allowed for the effective use of social media and other forms of communication.
- The American Red Cross (ARC) provided food and drinks to responders and bystanders including media personnel in a timely and effective manner.
- Effective case management conducted by ESFs 6, 11 & 15 provided the affected families and members of the community with critical assistance during and post incident.
- There was a good flow of information and operational awareness throughout the incident.
- A receiving mechanism for accepting donations was set up quickly to effectively manage incoming resources.
- The availability of robust Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) resources was a key factor in minimizing secondary injuries and damage.

Primary Areas for Improvement

Throughout the Faithway Drive Sinkhole response, opportunities for improvement in Hillsborough County's ability to respond to the incident were identified. The primary areas for improvement, including recommendations, are as follows:

- Regularly scheduled training and exercises involving a multi-agency response to include information sharing and command and control of resources would be beneficial.
- Although situational awareness was good, this could have been enhanced by publishing an operational schedule early in the response and disseminating it to all responding entities represented in the Unified Command structure.
- With a dynamic and rapidly changing scene, a better use of the Unified Command structure would have ensured a smoother transition from response to recovery and even remediation of the scene.
- The MCV provided a good base from which to operate. However, the unit as well as other resources should have been deployed earlier. This would have provided additional areas for breakouts and meeting spaces. Early deployment could prove beneficial in future incidents which rapidly expand.

- Utilization of ETEAM and the Hillsborough County Fire Rescue, Office of Emergency Management's (HCFR-OEM) Incident Management System, early in the activation of an extended response, will assist in tracking resource request and providing situational awareness.
- Early recognition of the need to further enhance scene security during incidents that rapidly intensify and expand beyond a routine scene would minimize unauthorized persons entry and allow for better coordination and placement of media affiliates.

SECTION 1: INCIDENT OVERVIEW

Incident Details

Incident Name

Faithway Drive Sinkhole Incident

Type of Incident

Sinkhole

Incident Start Date

February 28, 2013

Incident End Date

March 3, 2013

Duration

4 Days

Location

Hillsborough County- Seffner Community

Incident Description

On February 28, 2013, the Hillsborough County Fire Rescue, Emergency Dispatch Communications received a call for a building collapse at 240 Faithway Drive. As units responded to the scene and the call developed, it became clear that this was not just a structural collapse, but a sinkhole incident also.

Multiple agencies and contractors were involved in this response and all involved were able to mobilize resources quickly. Equipment, supplies, and support for on-scene responders was set up and made available for the duration of the event. Due to the nature of the incident, media outlets from all over the world ascended upon the incident.

Due to the instability of the area, the homes to the immediate left and right of the structure at 240 Faithway Drive were also evacuated and the area secured.

Responders continued working on the scene throughout the weekend. On Sunday, March 3, the primary structure was partially demolished and the incident scene secured. Incident Command was then transferred from Hillsborough County Fire Rescue to Hillsborough County Public Works.

Participating Agencies

• American Red Cross (ARC)	ESF 6
• Bracken Engineering	ESF 9
• Crisis Center of Tampa Bay	ESF 15
• Federal Aviation Authority (FAA)	Federal Agency
• Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM)	State Agency
• Hillsborough County Communications & Digital Media Services	ESF 14:
• Hillsborough County Fire Rescue (HCFR)	ESF 4,9,10
• Hillsborough County Fire Rescue, Office of Emergency Management (HCFR-OEM)	ESF 5
• Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office (HCSO)	ESF 16
• Hillsborough County Fire Rescue, Emergency Dispatch Communications (EDC)	ESF 2
• Hillsborough County Public Works	ESF 3
• Hillsborough County Animal Services	ESF 17
• Hillsborough County Family and Aging Services	ESF 6,11
• Hillsborough County Code Enforcement	ESF 3
• Hillsborough County Real Estate Services	ESF 5,7
• Hillsborough County Public Utilities Department (PUD)	ESF 3
• Hillsborough County Hazard Mitigation	ESF 3
• FL Dept. of Pubic Health- Hillsborough County	ESF 8
• Lutheran Services Florida	ESF 15
• Tampa Electric Company (TECO)	ESF 12

SECTION 2: INCIDENT SUMMARY

Incident Summary

Due to the prevalence of sinkholes in the area, a response to such an incident occurs regularly. In this case, the abnormality of having a possible victim involved, along with the instability of a structure overhead, created unique challenges for the first responders and mutual aid resources that were involved. The risks associated with these challenges created a multitude of tasks not normally performed in response to a common sinkhole. This required a significantly larger response of agencies, resources and support.

Although Hillsborough County was presented with many challenges during this response, the response team was able to coordinate with local, regional, State and Federal partners to maximize the use of resources to successfully respond to the event. The capabilities noted below have been identified as the primary capabilities demonstrated during this response.

Incident Capabilities

During this incident we demonstrated proficiencies in many of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Core Capabilities. This section outlines a few of the key areas but is by no means exhaustive. These include:

- Planning
 - Identify critical objectives based on the planning requirement, provide a complete and integrated picture of the sequence and scope of the tasks to achieve the objectives, and ensure the objectives are implementable within the time frame contemplated, within the plan, using available resources for prevention-related plans.
 - Develop operational plans that adequately identify critical objectives based on the planning requirements, provide a complete and integrated picture of the sequence and scope of the tasks to achieve the objectives, and are implementable within the time frame contemplated in the plan using available resources.
 - Convene the core of an inclusive planning team, which will oversee recovery planning.
- On-Site Incident Management
 - Direct On-Site Incident Management
 - Implement On-Site Incident Management
 - Establish Full On-Site Incident Command
 - Conduct Resource Management
 - Demobilize On-Site Incident Management
- Mass Care Services
 - Move and deliver resources and capabilities to meet the needs of survivors, including individuals with access and functional needs and others who may be considered to be at-risk.
 - Establish, staff, and equip emergency shelters and other temporary housing options (including accessible housing) for the affected population.
- Public Information and Warning
 - Communicate appropriate information, in an accessible manner, on the risks faced within a community after conducting a risk assessment. Move and deliver resources and capabilities to meet the needs of survivors, including individuals with access and functional needs and others who may be considered to be at-risk.

SECTION 3: ANALYSIS OF CAPABILITIES

This section of the report reviews the performance of the capabilities, activities, and tasks. The capabilities linked to the incident objectives of the Faithway Drive Sinkhole Incident are listed below. Each capability is followed by related observations, which include recommendations.

Capability 1: Planning

Capability Summary: Conduct a systematic process as appropriate in the development of executable strategic and operational based approaches to meet defined objectives.

Observation 1.1: All Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) and agencies identified for this response were able to effectively respond to the sinkhole incident based on their current plans.

Recommendations: Continued training, exercises and updates of plans will help to ensure effective responses in the future.

1. Strength- Familiarity with ESFs and agencies within Hillsborough County allowed the right agencies to be activated as part of the response. Continued building of relationships will allow agencies to better understand capabilities and increase working relationships.
2. Areas for Improvement- Working with identified ESFs and agencies to update, train and exercise their plans will help to better understand each agency's capabilities.
3. Areas for Improvement- Take advantage of additional opportunities for ICS training with identified ESFs and agencies will help to ensure effective use of plans within the National Incident Management System/Incident Command System (NIMS/ICS) structure.

Observation 1.2: Utilizing ETEAM in any extended response will help to maintain situational awareness and fulfill necessary reporting requirements.

Recommendations: Continued development of the ETEAM system and related training will help to ensure that the primary response staff, along with the supporting ESFs and partner agencies, are able to respond effectively.

1. Areas for Improvement- Explore ETEAM capabilities and make improvements where appropriate to ensure the necessary elements are captured. This may include identifying additional forms, software enhancements, and training for response staff.
2. Areas for Improvement- Provide additional ETEAM training to improve effectiveness specifically as it relates to response and recovery planning.

Capability 2: On-Site Incident Management

Capability Summary: Onsite Incident Management is the capability to effectively direct and control incident activities by using the Incident Command System (ICS) consistent with the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

Observation 2.1: It was identified early that this was going to be a multi-agency incident, and upon arrival of first due fire units on the scene Incident Command was established. As the incident progressed, a Unified Command System structure was identified and established.

Recommendations: Continued support, training and exercising of the Incident Command System and National Incident Management System to include:

1. Strength- Continued support of using a Unified Command System and the fostering of current relationships of all agencies that could respond. This is best done through regularly scheduled drills, table-top, functional, and full-scale exercises.
2. Area of Improvement- Further ICS training that takes potential Incident Commanders from outside of the normal ICS structure used in daily operations so as to create Branches and Divisions that could support a large scale, onsite incident.
3. Area of Improvement- Including within the Unified Command System all critical responding agencies would help to ensure situational awareness and better resources management.

Capability 3: Mass Care Services

Capability Summary: The capability to provide mass care services, to include shelter, feeding, basic first aid, distribution of needed items and other related services to persons affected by the incident, including special needs populations. People with special needs include individuals who need medical attention/personal care beyond basic first aid due to physical or mental impairment. Other populations may require special planning for certain needs, such as non-English speaking populations. The capability also provides for pet care/handling through appropriate animal-related organizations.

Observation 3.1: Due to changing complexity of the incident, it was necessary to quickly identify needs and provide available resources to effectively respond.

Recommendations: Continue to work with County partners to identify available resources and resource needs.

1. Strength- The ARC, Hillsborough County Family and Aging Services, and the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay among others worked to effectively respond to

various food, housing, and psychological needs of those involved in the incident. This included those directly impacted by the structures involved in the incident, responders, and bystanders including the media.

2. Areas for Improvement- Continue to work with county partners to identify agency capabilities and available resources through training and exercises. To ensure continued effectiveness, review current systems and processes for managing resources and make improvements as needed to ensure the highest level of service for the citizens of Hillsborough County.

Capability 4: Public Information and Warning

Capability Summary: Deliver coordinated, prompt, reliable, and actionable information to the whole community through the use of clear, consistent, accessible, and culturally and linguistically appropriate methods to effectively relay information regarding any threat or hazard and, as appropriate, the actions being taken and the assistance being made available.

Observation 4.1: It was beneficial to have the Fire Department Public Relations Officers (PROs) on scene early in the response; however it quickly became necessary to transition to a countywide public information operation using ESF 14.

Recommendations: Continue training to enhance a smooth transition from a department focused public information operation to a county wide ESF 14 operation when necessary.

1. Strength- As an initial Fire Rescue response, the Hillsborough County Fire Rescue Public Relations Officers (PROs) were the first public information resources on the scene. The PROs were able to effectively disseminate information utilizing various forms of social media and other tools to keep the community informed.
2. Strength- The inclusion of the ESF 14 partners early on in the response facilitated the transition from a department to a countywide message.
3. Areas for Improvement- More frequent meetings either via phone or in person with stakeholders involved in public information dissemination in the future will help to ensure that critical information is shared in a timely and effective manner.

SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

The areas of improvement listed below all include the use of training and exercises, which should assist all responding agencies in improving the required coordination of efforts necessary in responding to tropical storms, as well as other manmade or natural disasters or planned events. Training and exercises would facilitate the fine tuning of policies and procedures already in place and further build relationships with county agencies and response partners.

APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This IP has been developed specifically for Hillsborough County Fire Rescue and response agencies as a result of the sinkhole incident that occurred February 28th through March 3rd, 2013. These recommendations draw on both the After Action Report and the After Action Conference.

Table A.1: Improvement Plan Matrix

Capability	Observation Title	Recommendation	Corrective Action Description	Capability Element	Primary Responsible Agency	Agency POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Capability 1: Planning	Observation 1.1 Training	Continue to identify and work with ESFs and agencies to update, train, and exercise their plans.	Develop Training and Exercise Design Team	Training	Hillsborough County Fire Rescue, Office of Emergency Management	Marcus Martin	May 2013	May 2014

Capability	Observation Title	Recommendation	Corrective Action Description	Capability Element	Primary Responsible Agency	Agency POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Capability 1: Planning	Observation 1.1 Training	Work to identify additional opportunities for ICS training with ESFs and agencies to ensure effective use of plans within the NIMS/ICS system.	Develop Exercise and Training Design Team	Training	Hillsborough County Fire Rescue, Office of Emergency Management	Marcus Martin	May 2013	May 2014

Capability	Observation Title	Recommendation	Corrective Action Description	Capability Element	Primary Responsible Agency	Agency POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Capability 2: Planning	Observation 1.2 Reporting	Explore ETEAM capabilities and make improvements where appropriate to ensure the necessary elements are captured. This may include identifying additional forms, software enhancements and training for EOC staff.	Work with contractor to develop improvements to the system.	Reporting	Hillsborough County Fire Rescue, Office of Emergency Management	Mike Ryan	May 2013	May 2014

Capability	Observation Title	Recommendation	Corrective Action Description	Capability Element	Primary Responsible Agency	Agency POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Capability 2: Planning	Observation 1.2 Training	Provide additional ETEAM training to improve effectiveness; specifically as it relates to response and disaster recovery planning.	Increase ETEAM training opportunities for County ESFs and partner agencies.	Training	Hillsborough County Fire Rescue, Office of Emergency Management	Marcus Martin	May 2013	May 2014

Capability	Observation Title	Recommendation	Corrective Action Description	Capability Element	Primary Responsible Agency	Agency POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Capability 2: On-Site Incident Management	Observation 2.1 Training	Continued support, training, and exercising of the Incident Command System and National Incident Management System with a focus outside of the EOC.	Provide additional ICS training opportunities.	Training	Hillsborough County Fire Rescue	Chief C. Branam	May 2013	May 2014

Capability	Observation Title	Recommendation	Corrective Action Description	Capability Element	Primary Responsible Agency	Agency POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Capability 2: On-Site Incident Management	Observation 2.2 Operations	Utilizing the Unified Command System to include all critical responding agencies would help to ensure situational awareness and better resource management.	Identify additional exercise opportunities using Unified Command.	Operations	Hillsborough County Fire Rescue	Chief M. Guincho	June 2013	March 2014
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Capability	Observation Title	Recommendation	Corrective Action Description	Capability Element	Primary Responsible Agency	Agency POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Capability 3: Mass Care	Observation 3.1 Planning	Continue to work with County partners to identify available resources and resource needs.	Identify resource needs and capabilities through plan review, development, and updates.	Planning	Hillsborough County Fire Rescue, Office of Emergency Management	Michael Ryan	May 2013	June 2014

Capability	Observation Title	Recommendation	Corrective Action Description	Capability Element	Primary Responsible Agency	Agency POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Capability 4: Public Information and Warning	Observation 4.1 Training	Create specific guidelines that dictate when the transition from a department to a countywide message occurs.	Utilize exercise and training opportunities to enhance countywide emergency public information operations	Operations	Hillsborough County Communications	Willie Puz	June 2013	July 2013

APPENDIX B: LESSONS LEARNED

Hillsborough County strives to take every opportunity to learn and improve from every incident so that we may become better as an organization and continue to serve our citizens with the highest level of service. The Faithway Drive Sinkhole Incident provided several lessons learned that we will like to move forward as an organization. These include the following:

- It is important to control the location and placement of media personnel early during an incident to ensure both scene and safety management. A perimeter must be established that will allow the scene to grow if necessary while also providing an avenue for media access. This is critical to the safety and successful management of an incident.
- Any incident of this magnitude will require significant resources and support from multiple agencies. We must ensure all necessary equipment is identified and brought to the scene early on to include mobile command vehicles, tents and other equipment that facilitates on scene operational management.
- Ensure the process for transitioning from a normal departmental public information operation to a countywide (one voice) public information operation, ie. ESF 14, is clear.

APPENDIX C: MAP OF INCIDENT



APPENDIX D: ACRONYMS

AAR	After Action Review/Report
ARC	American Red Cross
BOCC	Board of County Commissioners
EDC	Emergency Dispatch Communications
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
ESF	Emergency Support Function
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FOUO	For Official Use Only
HCFR	Hillsborough County Fire Rescue
HCSO	Hillsborough County Sheriffs Office
HSEEP	Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program
ICS	Incident Command System
IP	Improvement Plan
LLIS	Lessons Learned Information Sharing
MCV	Mobile Command Vehicle
NIMS	National Incident Management System
OEM	Office of Emergency Management
POC	Point of Contact
PRO	Public Relations Officer
PUD	Public Utilities Department
TECO	Tampa Electric Company